DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 392 EA 030 053

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TITLE	Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools. A Report from Public Agenda.
SPONS AGENCY	Kraft General Foods Foundation, Glenview, IL.
ISBN	ISBN-1-889483-59-1
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	50p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Public Agenda, 6 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016 ($10). Tel: 212-686-6610, Fax: 212-889-3461, E-mail: paresearch@aol.com; Web site: <http://www.publicagenda.org>.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; National Surveys; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Participation; Parent Role; Parent School Relationship; *Public Schools; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings from two national opinion surveys that looked at issues surrounding parental involvement in schools. One survey assessed the views of 1,000 public school teachers; the other examined the views of 1,220 parents of children currently in public school. The focus of the survey was to find out what parents and teachers believed to be the core elements of parental involvement. The document is organized around the study's seven findings: (1) parents and teachers have cordial and positive relationships; (2) neither parents nor teachers want parents more heavily involved in managing public schools or making decisions about staffing or curriculum; (3) parents and teachers endorse the "bake sale" model of parental involvement (that is, parents as volunteers and helpmates); (4) parents and teachers believe that parents' main job is to raise well-behaved children who want to learn; (5) teachers believe they cannot do their best job teaching because too many students lack the basic discipline to learn; (6) parents, like teachers, feel somewhat beleaguered in having the time to reinforce their children's education; and (7) homework is the vortex where teacher complaints and parental pressures converge. A separate section on rethinking parental involvement is included. Seven tables provide survey results on various issues addressed in the report. (RJM)

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